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Statistics Show Staten Island As Borough of Great Resources

Staten Island, comprising Richmond County, covers an area of fifty-seven square miles and has:

Thirty-five miles of waterfront.

Four hundred and five miles of streets.

Six ferry systems.—Trunk line rail connections.

Two bridges being built (to Elizabeth and Perth Amboy); third span (to Bayonne, N. J.) authorized.

Highest elevation on Atlantic Coast between Maine and Florida.

Population, 147,000.

One hundred and fifty industries employing 15,000.

Seventy-one schools, one college.

Four libraries, many extensions branches.

Twenty-three docks and piers, facilities for largest ocean liners.



Staten Island's Rolling Hills, Tree-Shaded Highways

Rural Effects And City Life Blend in Area

**Abundance of Scenery and
Good Roads With Ocean
Tang in Air Lies Only a
Short Ferry Run Away**

Borough of Big Progress

**Many Points of Region Con-
nected With Stirring Deeds
of the Colonial Times**

By Bert Pierce

Automobile Editor

Over the sky blue water is Staten Island, a borough of good roads, impressive scenery, vast commercial enterprises and a past containing vivid strands of history. On one hand, the ocean, always changeful, ever casting mighty spells; on the other rolling hills and tree-shaded highways stretching into borderlands of bustling city life of Richmond County. Truly this combination is unique. An island of 57 square miles area with almost 150,000 inhabitants, yet it offers one of the most attractive single day automobile trips in New York or vicinity.

For the motorist on the mainland or Brooklyn there are great ferryboats in plenty running at brief intervals. From Manhattan a start can be made off the Battery. Those living in Brooklyn have a choice of lines, one touching at Thirty-ninth Street, a second docking at Sixty-ninth Street. Each craft in this service accommodates scores of cars and hundreds of passengers.

A siren sounds, gates clank, white foam churns, wooden pier stockades creak and sway as the vessel gets underway for a twenty-minute passage across the most interesting harbor in the world. Over the starboard bow can be seen the towering Statue of Liberty, at the left is Governor's Island, where those ancient guns of Castle William frown seaward in mock menace.

Delightful breezes caress waters of the Upper Bay, which is a panorama of passing ships, from stately liners to rusty freighters. At the right lies Ellis Island, with roofs glittering in the sunlight. Tiny figures are discernible passing to and from buildings.

Bedloe's Island, slightly nearer, appears a sheaf of structures. At the end of the white wake is a skyline that famous artists from the Old World have made long journeys to gaze upon.

Arrival at St. George

What a charming voyage! There are so many wonders to attract attention that, when bells sound as St. George is reached and passengers throng forward to land on Staten Island, one regrets the limited time afloat. The boat is tied up, motor engines hum, gears are shifted and cars glide up a broad ramp to the intersection of Richmond Terrace and Bay Avenue. All congestion and confusion which might arise over incoming and outgoing vehicles at this point is averted by spacious thoroughfares and excellent police regulations.

Pause for a bit in St. George and watch the wheels of industry. Here are a number of massive piers, including some of the biggest in the world. Extensive railway facilities are afforded to gather goods sent from many climes and move them inland over a connecting railroad bridge. The amount of merchandise transported annually attains a staggering total.

Riding along Bay Avenue, past the Staten Island Chamber of Commerce, an organization with a record of achievement, the motorist finds thriving business on all sides.

At Tompkinsville, the next point on the route, which lies above the feet of jutting piers, there is a bit of memory arousing, historic interest, although it is now a flagstone for the march of progress. Away back in the olden days, when brown-faced sailors wore tarry queques and cutlasses, there was a spring of sweet water at this place, known to those who sailed in ships of many nations. Voyagers put in to replenish water butts and a babel of tongues mingled with swishing of buckets. In later years the forces of the crown drank deep of this fluid while they held possession of Staten Island during the Revolutionary War.

Still following Bay Avenue the motorist will go close to the site of the old Vanderbilt homestead, once the dwelling of Commodore Cornelius Vanderbilt, who founded the family fortune by his shipping activities, and turn off at Vanderbilt Avenue for a side run, one of the most alluring on the island. Continue down to the junction of Clove Road, take that thoroughfare until reaching Mather Place, then turn left onward to Ocean Terrace. Adjacent is Todt Hill, the highest point on Staten Island and the greatest elevation on the Atlantic Coast between Maine and Florida.

Excellent Views Obtained

During the journey the traveler obtains excellent views of the inner harbor and also of the outer stretch of ocean extending to Sandy Hook. On a sunny day, when the water is glittering and faraway sails show white like wings of seagulls, it is a delicious privilege to park the car and gaze over a marine scene of surpassing beauty.

Proceeding onward through Todt Hill Road, in the distance, may be discovered traces of pits of several iron mines which once yielded goodly tonnage in the last century. Farther

along is the Richmond County Country Club, a pleasant niche with numerous attractive features. The sporty course of the club has won throughout the East and many notable matches have been played there.

From gay to grave is but a meal of gasoline, and the motorist arrives at the entrance of the Moravian Cemetery. Bountiful Nature and the hands of men have combined in beautification of this resting place. The faded, but unusual floral effects, sprang from an atmosphere of unutterable peace and calm. Famous names are inscribed on headstones and monuments. Among these commemorative tributes is a mausoleum of the Vanderbilt family.

Where Todt Hill Road meets Richmond Road the traveler approaches a bit of ground used by General Howe, one-time commander of the British army, for his headquarters. Many a toast was quaffed there to the confusion of "the rebel, Washington" while plans for battles and campaigns

were laid by the sluggish royal leader whose indolence won him the title "one of the best friends of the Americans."

In this neighborhood is an outstanding relic of Colonial days, the Black Horse Tavern, where British officers in scarlet uniforms, met for revel and mirthful pastimes. Under the roof-tree the debonnaire Major And made his will before undertaking a mission that ended on the gallows as a spy. Legend has it that a good piece of turf, only a stone's throw away was a duelling ground where affairs of honor were settled and several gentlemen of the King felt the chill of death as swords clashed at dawn.

Records show that the merry gatherings at the Black Horse Tavern proved of great benefit to the Continental cause. Some of the waiters, napkin over arms, who served the English officers so assiduously were keen-minded members of Washington's intelligence service and military secrets blurted over wine cups went straight to the ear of the American commander.

How Patriots Carried Secrets

A clearing contact for the information obtained was established at the Christopher House, approximately a couple of miles away on Willowbrook Road close to what is now the junction of Forest Hill Road and Victory Boulevard. To-day there are fine hard-surface highways leading through a populous country to that dwelling; then there was a tortuous secret path skirting the bewitching Egbertville Ravine.

It is well to note that the Christopher House also has a glorious past being used as a meeting place for the committee of safety in 1776 and as a rendezvous by daring patriots who time and again risked death by the noose to carry valuable news to the American forces in New Jersey.

After a visit to the Black Horse Tavern the motorist who is out for a day's enjoyment can make a turn about on Richmond Road to the northeast, toward the Hylan Boulevard. Before one reaches that cross island thoroughfare, draw up at the Perine House. The oldest part of this structure dates back to 1680. There is much historical data associated with this edifice and a touch of romance, too. During the Revolution, so the

And Historic Spots Offer Alluring One-Day Motor Trip

story goes, a royalist captain, one of General Howe's aides, was quartered in the quaint old dwelling. The bright eyes and dimpling smiles of a daughter of a patriot family won his heart. After war-time courtship he married her and they went to England. Waif like stories intimate that the fascinating captain was unable to hold the prize he captured on his return to the homeland and that he was deserted for greater names and larger fortunes.

First Permanent Settlement

A shift into Fingerboard Road, and a brief jaunt along the thoroughfare brings the autoists into Hylan Boulevard. This wide, hard surface thoroughfare extends approximately eighteen miles and spans the island. Near its source, on Bay Avenue, there is Fort Wadsworth, with powerful defense guns and other munitions of modern warfare. Although this area is government reservation visitors are welcome at certain times. An inspection of Uncle Sam's sea outpost will linger in memory.

Sweeping along the boulevard the traveler passes the site of the first permanent settlement in Staten Island, established in 1661, not far from the present South Beach. Next comes the Federal Aviation Field near Midland, Woodland and New Dorp beaches.

Many thrills await those who watch the flyers in action.

At the corner of New Dorp Lane and Cedar Grove Avenue, a few blocks seaward of the boulevard, is the Britton Cottage. Nathaniel and Elizabeth Britton, early settlers on this land in 1695. Their descendants, of the same name, gave it to the Staten Island Institute of Art and Sciences in 1915 to be preserved as an historical structure.

With an open road the motorist continues on, with Seguin Point at the right, where refugees slaves often camped when escaping northward during the Civil War and into a charming view of Princes Bay. On the shores of this inlet the government decreed that a detention camp should be built to take stricken ones from ships. That was in 1858, when a scourge of cholera was raging and the patients were transferred under guard. Fear of pestilence cast its shadow on the coast dwellers and between arrivals they put the torch to the empty buildings. From there to Tottenville and the old Billop house is a matter of only a few minutes.

The fame of the Billop house has spread far and wide. Within its walls was held a famous conference on September 11, 1776, between Benjamin Franklin, John Adams and Edward Rutledge, representing the Continental Congress, and Richard Howe, admiral

of the British fleet. No agreement was reached over terms offered to the Colonists to end the war. Last fall a celebration was held to mark the 150th anniversary of this parley.

The Billop house, now a treasured ward of the city, was in the days of long ago the key to the Manor of Bentley. This tract of land included 1,600 acres and was granted to Captain Billop in 1687. The original boundaries, roughly given, were from Rossville on Arthur Kill to the shore line of Princes Bay.

Tottenville, lying at the base of the pleasant Arthur Kill Road and the Amboy Road, also is the gateway to the ferry line to Perth Amboy. This connection with Jersey is a boon to thousands of motorists. The service is frequent and the way is short. Almost 12,000 cars were accommodated on these boats over a recent holiday period.

A short time hence automobilists will have even greater facilities for reaching the mainland, as a bridge to Perth Amboy soon will be completed, while another from Howland Hook, which is several miles northward, will extend to Elizabethport.

Relics of Revolution

The Arthur Kill Road, running to Tottenville, becomes a cross-island thoroughfare from Rossville and connects with Richmond Road and Richmond Boulevard. A short distance from this junction is the site of French Church, founded in 1698. Motor along Richmond Road, and not far off is St. Andrew's Church, founded in 1709. It was in this vicinity that the British built a number of fortifications, and many relics, including regimental buttons, pipes, pottery and even children's toys of the Colonial period, have been unearthed there.

The Amboy Road, tracing through miles of charming scenery, leads the motorist from Tottenville into Richmond Road.

For those who land at St. George and wish to make a short cut across State Island there is the Victory Boulevard, a direct route to the Carteret ferry. This highway passes through a stretch of gentle hills and beautiful views.

Then there is the Chelsea Road, rising out of the community by that name on Arthur Kill and merging into South

Avenue. The traveler can make a left turn off South Avenue into Washington Avenue and arrive shortly within sight of the spot which was the principal Indian encampment on the island prior to 1609. Now, of course, the area is dedicated to commerce.

Returning to South Avenue, the motorist continues on to Richmond Terrace, where the Elizabethport ferry line lies at the terminus to the left. On the right is the route to New Brighton past Sailor's Snug Harbor, that inviting retreat for old salts, known throughout the seven seas.

So much for a brief outline of some of the historic lure and main highways of Staten Island. There are a number of secondary roads and city streets which can be used by the automobilist to attain many well known places and resorts. In fact, it will take more than a day for the motorist to see all the points which will well repay visits.

This Borough of Richmond at the present time has the population of a large city. Houses have sprung up by the hundreds during the last decade in sections where formerly lands were tilled or trees flourished. St. George is a great trade center and stretching away for miles are huge railroad yards. Ancient names have been retained for the various communities where vast industries keep the world supplied with their outputs.

In the interior of Staten Island there are tracts of rolling farm lands and rural scenes which form a pleasant contrast to the rush of city life. Such diversity of scene is a boon to the dwellers.

Factors in Progress

Among the leading factors in the progress of Staten Island—and this borough certainly has forged rapidly to the forefront within a comparatively short period—is the neighborly spirit of civic pride. Dwellers throughout the county have worked almost as a unit to advance home interests, and the results have been extended beyond expectations.

There is a goodly list of trade and civic organizations on the island, and numerous recent improvements amounting to many thousands are due to their efforts. Among these ardent workers for borough welfare are the Staten Island Chamber of Commerce, Staten Island Civic League, Rotary Club, Kiwanis Club, Lions Club, Port Richmond Board of Trade, South Shore Protective Association, Tompkinsville Board of Trade, Mariner's Harbor Board of Trade, West Brighton Board of Trade, New Brighton Board of Trade, Durkee Manor Property Owners' Association, Grant City Improvement Association, Richmond Borough Board of Trade and Transportation, Westerleigh Improvement Society, Staten Island Woman's Co-operative Council, Oakwood Heights Improvement Association, Fox Beach Property Owners' Improvement Association, Richmond County Coal Merchants' Association, Staten Island Real Estate Board, Great Kills Community Council, Dongan Hills Improvement Society, New Dorp Board of Trade, Staten Island Group, New York Employing Printers' Association and the Staten Island branch, W. C. T. U.

And there are several country clubs, with exceptional recreational facilities, a number of social, musical and literary organizations, besides athletic clubs on the island. Add to this roster the charities and welfare bodies and a comprehensive gauge may be made of the resources of the borough.

A treasure chest of historical lore and facts is the Public Museum on Stuyvesant Place. Indian war and peace implements, found on the island, flintlock guns and pistols used by the forefathers to protect their log homes from savage marauders, relics of the Revolutionary War, and other mute reminders of the hardships of the distant past are to be seen there. Curious of many sorts lie within the glass top cabinets, giving the visitors every opportunity to study the periods and events of several centuries.

Legions are looking forward to the long promised day when underwater tunnels will link Staten Island with the mainland. In a short time traffic bridges will be completed to Jersey, bringing a new host of visitors. These

structural facilities will shorten the route to the Jersey coast resorts as they will allow the travelers to escape much of the congestion and relieve a problem which has caused much worry within the last few years. With commendable foresight the borough has prepared wide roads to receive this influx of motorists.

Every rosy indication points to a still more golden future for Staten Island, this sturdy, seabound member of Father Knickerbocker's family.

